

3/3/21

Thank you Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, and the members of the committee.

My name is Allison Martin from Baltic Connecticut, speaking on behalf of the Integrated Day Charter School in Norwich CT. I am currently an I.D.C.S. governing board member, my husband and I volunteer for the I.D.C.S. foundation and volunteer at the school when we can.

We are in favor of the Governor's recent proposal increasing the funding for charter schools through Senate Bill 948, Senate Bill 949, and Senate Bill 886.

Our children attended a local public school before being selected by lottery to join the Integrated Day Charter School. This was a great opportunity for us all. At I.D.C.S., when you attend the Integrated Day Charter School you are joining a family. When someone is in need, another IDCS family member is lending out a hand to help. While the support from other families is outstanding. The leadership from the administration and team is top notch. It feels like "Cheers, everyone knows your name!" With the onset of this pandemic, something as small as knowing a name is huge. Folks are stuck in homes and online having minimal personal interaction. Those little personal touches are big.

A fellow I.D.C.S. family member shared a story with me of how one of our dedicated teachers personally delivered a needed research notebook so her child's remote learning wouldn't be disrupted.

To take it a step further, one of the members of the kitchen staff noticed my son wasn't eating much of his lunch. They reached out and asked if they can make him something different or how they can help. This is a level of observation that is above and beyond. These are only a few of many stories I could share about the attention to detail that the IDCS staff exhibits.

Our school watches every nickel and dime, not only for today, this year, but for the many years to come. With our funding, we provide a strong education, maintain our building and equipment forcing us to spread our dollar much further than other schools who have to worry solely about the education.

We make the necessary sacrifices like utilizing *free* online instructional programs and platforms which are limiting. We have had to hold off on upgrading our library/technology center due to lack of funding. We have all learned recently that an area we must be strong in and constantly improve is technology. Without growing our technology our students will be at a disadvantage. We want to be better today than we were yesterday. If we stay in the same holding pattern we won't grow.

Before being a part of I.D.C.S., I didn't know the difference between a public school and a charter school. I assumed every child is treated the same. Every education is equally important and assumed the funding is the same. These are the rules we teach our kids, equality for all. Why should the charter schools be funded differently? I.D.C.S. does great things with the means they have. A school's primary focus should be education and safety, not funding. That is

the responsibility of the community. I am before you today, asking for you to help the Integrated Day Charter School, and other charter schools with similar struggles to take the funding worry off the list. Increase the per pupil funding. After all, wouldn't you want *your* child's education to be equally funded?